AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (*Currently Amended*) A method of operating a data transmission network comprising at least two outer rings and a middle ring which are coupled to one another via nodes, wherein one of the nodes represents a central node for all three rings, and wherein switching devices for the establishment of connections are contained in each of the nodes, wherein the method comprises:~~comprising the steps of~~

recognizing that a connection is to be established from the one outer ring to the other outer ring via the middle ring, and

establishing the connection using ~~taking into account~~ all three rings, wherein the connection is established by:

splitting the connection at a start point into two parallel connections and routing the connection via one of the outer rings;

routing one of the two parallel connections directly via the central node to the other outer ring;

routing the other of the two parallel connections via the middle ring to the other outer ring; and

combining the two parallel connections at an end point.

2. (*Currently Amended*) The ~~A~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein the central node comprises two switching devices, and wherein the connection is established via one of the two switching devices of the central node~~, preferably as shared protection ring~~.

3. The ~~A~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein establishment of the connection further comprises ~~the steps of~~:

[[-]] ~~splitting the connection at a start point into two parallel connections and routing the connection via one of the two outer rings,~~

[[-]] routing the two parallel connections to a switching device in the central node and to a switching device in one of the two other nodes, respectively,

[[-]] routing, from each of the two switching devices, a connection to the respective other switching device, and

[[-]] routing, from the two switching devices, two parallel connections via the middle ring to the other outer ring.[[,]] ~~and~~

[[-]] ~~combining the two parallel connections at an end point.~~

4. (*Currently Amended*) The ~~A~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein the middle ring comprises two connections parallel to one another, and wherein the connection is established via one of the two parallel connections.

5. (*Currently Amended*) The ~~A~~ method according to Claim 1, wherein at least one of the rings is ~~has the form of~~ a shared-protection-ring-connection.

6. (*Currently Amended*) The ~~A~~ method according to Claim 5, wherein at least one ring and at least one shared-protection-ring-connection are combined.

7. (*New*) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the connection is established as a shared-protection-ring.

8. (*New*) A data transmission network comprising:

at least two outer rings and a middle ring which are coupled to one another via nodes, wherein one of the nodes represents a central node for all three rings;

a plurality of switching devices for the establishment of connections disposed in each of the nodes; and

a controller that controls the plurality of switching devices, wherein the controller recognizes that a connection is to be established from the one outer ring to the other outer ring via the middle ring, and establishes the connection using all three rings by splitting the connection at a start point into two parallel connections and routing the connection via one of the outer rings, routing one of the two parallel connections directly via the central node to the other outer ring, routing the other of the two parallel connections via the middle ring to the other outer ring and combining the two parallel connections at an end point.

9. (*New*) The network according to Claim 8, wherein the central node comprises two switching devices, and wherein the connection is established via one of the two switching devices of the central node.

10. (*New*) The network according to Claim 8, wherein establishment of the connection by the controller further comprises routing the two parallel connections to a switching device in the central node and to a switching device in one of the two other nodes respectively, routing from each of the two switching devices a connection to the respective other switching device, and routing, from the two switching devices, two parallel connections via the middle ring to the other outer ring.

11. (*New*) The network according to Claim 8, wherein the middle ring comprises two connections parallel to one another, and wherein the connection is established via one of the two parallel connections.

12. (*New*) The network according to Claim 8, wherein at least one of the rings is a shared-protection-ring-connection.

13. (*New*) The method according to Claim 12, wherein at least one ring and at least one shared-protection-ring-connection are combined.

14. (*New*) The method according to Claim 9, wherein the connection is established as a shared-protection-ring.